

REMARKS

In the Office Action of April 24, 2003, the specification was objected to for using reference numeral 38 to refer to both a "vacuum insert" and a "transfer pad". In the present Amendment, Applicants have amended the specification in order to correct for this informality.

Also, in the Office Action, the drawings were rejected under 37 CFR § 1.83 (a) for failing to show an air knife, a water knife, an interference device, and a severing roll. In the present Amendment, Applicants are submitting a new, corrected set of drawings that include the addition of new Figures 4, 5, and 6. These three newly added Figures show an air knife 100, a water knife 102, and an interference device 104. Applicants respectfully submit that a severing roll 40 is shown in Fig. 3 of the drawings. Applicants submit that the changes to the drawings do not inject new matter into the application, and as such Applicants respectfully request the objections to the drawings be removed.

Also in the Office Action, claims 1-22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, for making use of the terms "it", "its", "they", "their", and "them". In the present Amendment, Applicants have amended the claims in order to correct for these informalities and therefore request the § 112 rejections be removed.

Further, claims 1, 4, 7-10, 13, 15-19, and 22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 (b) as being anticipated by Dropczynski (U.S. Patent No. 4,408,727).

Claims 2, 3, 5, 6, 12, 14, 20, and 21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103

(a) as being unpatentable over Dropczynski in view of Yamaguchi et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,333,869).

Additionally, claim 11 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 (a) as being unpatentable over Dropczynski in view of McNeil et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,308,909).

Applicants submit that claim 1 defines over Dropczynski. Respectfully, Dropczynski does not disclose an apparatus for severing a web where a leading edge of the upstream portion of the web is capable of being held against a rotating transfer roll by suction force at a location immediately adjacent the location where a severing means separates the web, and where a tailing edge of the downstream portion of the web is capable of being held against the rotating transfer roll by a suction force at a location immediately adjacent the location where the severing means separates the web. Support for this Amendment can be found in at least Figs. 1 and 2 of the drawings and related discussion that show the upstream and downstream portions of the web being capable of being held against the rotating transfer roll by a suction force at a location immediately adjacent the location where the web is severed.

Dropczynski discloses a web severing apparatus that has a support roll 5 provided with a plurality of radial suction orifices 7 (see Dropczynski at column 3, lines 33-36; and Fig. 1). A severing means 9 is used to cut the web 6 at a location where an axial slot 11 is located on the circumference of the support roll 5 (see Dropczynski at column 3, lines 37-40). The suction orifices 7 are only

present on one side of the axial slot 11, and only act to secure that portion of the upstream portion of the web 6 to the support roller, but do not act to secure the downstream portion of the web 6 to the support roller. The downstream portion of the web 6 being, for instance, the portion of the web 6 from the axial slot 11 to the finished roll 1 (see Fig. 1 of Dropczynski).

It is therefore the case that the web 6 is not secured to the support roller 5 once that portion of the web 6 located downstream from the axial slot 11 is severed.

Claim 1, on the other hand, calls for an apparatus for severing a web where both the leading edge of the upstream portion and the tailing edge of the downstream portion are capable of being held against the rotating transfer roll by a suction force at a location immediately adjacent the location where the severing means separates the web. As noted, this structure is different from Dropczynski which is only capable of holding the web to the support roll 5 on one side of the location where the web 6 is severed. Applicants submit that the configuration called for in claim 1 is beneficial over prior designs in that the resulting apparatus is not adversely affected by centrifugal forces acting upon the transfer roll (see page 2, lines 20-22 of Applicants' Application), and in that holding the upstream and downstream portions of the web against the rotating transfer roll increases the percentage of clean and successful web severings. As such, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 1 defines over Dropczynski and is in condition for allowance. Further, all claims which depend from claim 1 (claims

2-6 and 8) are also in condition for allowance. Their rejections being made moot due to the allowance of claim 1.

As stated, claim 9 was rejected under § 102 (b) as being anticipated by Dropczynski. Applicants have amended claim 9 such that it calls for an apparatus for severing a web where a transfer pad is employed and configured to releasably adhere the separated web to a transfer roll at a location on both sides immediately adjacent to the location where the severing device separates the web. This Amendment, although not exact, is similar to the Amendment made above with respect to claim 1. As such, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 9 defines over Dropczynski and is in condition for allowance for essentially the same reasons as discussed above with respect to claim 1. Further, all claims which depend from claim 9 (claims 10-13) are also in condition for allowance. Their rejections being made moot due to the allowance of claim 9.

As stated, claim 14 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 (a) as being unpatentable over Dropczynski in view of Yamaguchi. In the Office Action, Yamaguchi was cited for the proposition of using a severing roll in order to separate the web. Applicants submit that claim 14 defines over this combination of references. Respectfully, the references do not disclose an apparatus for separating a web where a transfer pad is employed and is configured to releasably adhere the separated web to the rotating transfer roll at a location on both side immediately adjacent to the location where the severing roll separates the web.

Yamaguchi discloses a cut web tail edge holding means which is specifically designed so as not to employ a vacuum force in order to hold web onto a transfer roll (see Yamaguchi at column 2, lines 46-61). Dropczynski, on the other hand, is directed towards an apparatus that uses a vacuum force in order to hold an upstream portion of the web 6 to the support roller 5. As such, it would not have been obvious to one skilled in the art to incorporate any of the features of Yamaguchi into Dropczynski because the two references teach in opposite directions towards a method of holding the web to the transfer roll.

Regardless, Yamaguchi was only cited for the proposition of incorporating a severing roll into an apparatus for separating a web. Yamaguchi does not disclose an apparatus for separating a web where a transfer pad is employed and is configured to releasably adhere the separated web to the rotating transfer roll at a location on both sides immediately adjacent to the location where the severing roll separates the web. As stated with respect to claim 1, this structure is not present in Dropczynski, and therefore any incorporation of the teachings of Yamaguchi into Dropczynski would also not render obvious the apparatus as claimed in claim 14 of Applicants' application. As such, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 14 defines over the combination of Dropczynski and Yamaguchi and is in condition for allowance.

Claim 15 was rejected in the Office Action of April 24, 2003 as being unpatentable under § 102(b) in view of Dropczynski. Applicants have amended claim 15 so that it calls for an additional step of adhering the web to the surface

of the transfer roll by using a suction force at a location on both sides immediately adjacent to the location where the web was separated. This amendment is substantially similar to the amendment made above with respect to claim 1, and Applicants submit that claim 15 is in condition for allowance for essentially the same reasons as discussed above with respect to claim 1. Further, all claims which depend from claim 15, (claims 16-22) are also in condition for allowance. Their rejections being made moot due to the allowance of claim 15.

With the present Amendment, Applicants submit that all claims are allowable and that the Application is in condition for allowance. Favorable action thereon is respectfully requested. The Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned at his convenience to resolve any remaining issues.

Respectfully submitted,

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